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Agriculture

Office of Homeland  
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**TO: Agency Heads**

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**SUBJECT: Prioritization/Protection of USDA Facilities**

**INTRODUCTION:**

As a result of the USDA Strengthening Service Administrative Solutions (SSAS) Project, the following policy has been established to address the Prioritization and Protection of USDA's Facility Critical Infrastructure and all other USDA Facilities.

**BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:**

USDA owns or leases an estimated 50,000 structures and facilities which could be vulnerable to acts of terrorism and other forms of violence. Approximately 9,800 of these facilities are occupied facilities. Per the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Interagency Security Committee (ISC) Standard, all non-critical infrastructure facilities must be assessed every five years. In addition, all facilities meeting USDA's Facility Critical Infrastructure criteria (specified below) must be assessed every three years.

The purpose of this policy memorandum is to provide guidance and program assistance to USDA Agencies for the prioritization of their assigned facilities based on set criteria. This guidance will also support development of a common standard to conduct physical security assessments in order to identify threats and vulnerabilities that may exist, as well as a strategy to mitigate these vulnerabilities to the maximum extent possible.

Per this memorandum, USDA has identified five priority levels for its Facility Critical Infrastructure. Any USDA facility that meets one of the following five criteria levels must be identified by the Agency annually and be assessed every three years:

- Level One: Facilities housing Regulated Select Agents and/or Biological Safety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratories; Irradiators; Chemical Storage Facilities that have been assigned risk tier 1-4 by DHS (per DHS 6 CFR Part 27); Artillery/Explosives Facilities; and the USDA Headquarters Complex (South/Whitten);

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- Level Two: Facilities housing Diagnostic Laboratories; Primary Germplasm Genebanks/National Inventories; USDA Enterprise Class Data Centers; and Payroll Centers;
- Level Three: USDA Agency Headquarters Facilities; Continuity Level 4 Facilities; Devolution Facilities; and Agency Emergency Relocation Facilities
- Level Four: Facilities housing unique or one of a kind assets that are not easily replaceable but critical to the mission of USDA; and
- Level Five: Large Office Facilities (750 plus USDA personnel).

Note: The ISC Standards were issued pursuant to the authority of the ISC contained in Executive Order 12977 as amended by Executive Order 13286. The standards are applicable to all buildings and facilities in the United States occupied by Federal employees for nonmilitary activities. The ISC has mandated that any facility entering into the Federal inventory on or after April 12, 2010, shall use the Physical Security Criteria (PSC) process in accordance with the ISC Physical Security Criteria for Federal Facilities. Furthermore, all Federal Facilities that were in the inventory prior to April 12, 2010, must use the PSC process on their next scheduled assessment.

### ACTIONS:

USDA Agencies: In accordance with this policy, USDA Agencies should:

- Revalidate their list of Critical Infrastructure on an annual basis (January 1, XXXX of each calendar year) and provide a copy of the agency list to the Director of the USDA, OHSEC;
- Report any changes to their existing Critical Infrastructure list that are made during the calendar year to the OHSEC within 30 days of the change; and
- Coordinate and conduct security assessments of Agency Critical Infrastructure based on the timelines established above (every three years) and have agency trained personnel conduct self-assessments of all other USDA Facilities (every five years).

OHSEC: In accordance with this policy, OHSEC should:

- Maintain the USDA Critical Infrastructure List;
- Provide a copy of list to each individual Agency annually;
- Assist the USDA Agencies with their assessment schedule, as needed, to ensure compliance of the established timelines;
- Coordinate agency resources to meet USDA facility physical security assessment schedule requirements;
- Maintain a consolidated repository for USDA security assessment reports; and
- Adopt a standard risk based management methodology and assessment template to conduct these assessments in accordance with the Government Accountability Office.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact the OHSEC Physical Security Division at [physicalsecurity@dm.usda.gov](mailto:physicalsecurity@dm.usda.gov) or call at 202-720-5225.